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European
Environmental
Policy

Mainstreaming SDGs

European Sustainable Development Report

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Overview

- EGD and sustainability mainstreaming
- SDG mainstreaming with other EU processes and policies
 - Better Regulation and the SDGs
- Mainstreaming SDG in EU recovery plan
- Mainstreaming SDGs in the coordination of EU economic policies
 - European Semester and the SDGs

European Green Deal - Mainstreaming sustainability

ambition to transform its economy and society to put it on a more sustainable path

The Green Deal is an integral part of this Commission's strategy to implement the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals

- put sustainability and the well-being of citizens at the centre of economic policy
- put the sustainable development goals at the heart of the EU's policymaking and action
 - **EU's strategies and processes** should be designed to achieve the European Green Deal and the SDGs.
 - **'Sustainability proofing' to screen** the impact on climate, environmental and social objectives.
 - Incorporate measures to ensure a fair transition and strengthen **EU's resilience** and preparedness for major disruptive events.
 - **Regularly assess progress** towards achieving long-term goals (distance to targets)
 - Employ **digital technologies** -critical enabler for attaining the sustainability goals

2019 EUROSTAT SDG report

Provides good statistical overview based on the agreed indicators

- However, indicators sometimes offer partial information, are not sufficiently adequate to European conditions, obsolete or not indicative enough

Acknowledges but still needs to improve:

- 37 indicators are 'multi-purpose', meaning they are used to monitor more than one goal.
- The monitoring of interlinked nature of SDG -investigating trade-offs, synergies and unintended consequences emerging from relationships between those goals
- The need of assessment of the distance to targets - monitoring improvement

The European environment — state and outlook 2020: knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe - Europe faces environmental challenges of unprecedented scale and urgency

Mainstreaming SDG and Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox

Better regulation as an instrument of coherence with the SDGs

- A systematic assessment of the methodological options for further integration of the SDGs in the Better Regulation guidelines and toolbox

ACTIONS

- A consistent assessment of long lasting impact and measurement of distance to targets against agreed adequate indicators
- A targeted review of impact on health and wellbeing
- Incorporating resilience and crisis response
- Cost-benefit analysis -combined with more qualitative elements (quality of life and wellbeing, health)
- Abandon silos approach and look for co-benefits and negative externalities and criteria for trade-off if prioritisation is needed
- Further work on reviewing the available indicators (more multipurpose indicators)

Mainstreaming SDG and Better Regulation

- SDGs were integrated within the European Semester for the first time in 2020 – explore similar methodologies
 - Bertelsmann Stiftung guidelines on Sustainability Impact Assessments
 - SDG Impact Assessment (SDSN)
 - Sustainability impact assessment SIA (OECD)
- One can start with a definition of the potential impact of an initiative/legislative proposal on the SDGs
- EU to further ‘translate’ the goals and targets into EU goals and targets, so this exercise does not need to be repeated with each new proposal
- The distinction between short-, medium- and long-term effects makes it possible to compare the impact analysis that concerns intergenerational burden-sharing.

ACTIONS

- Develop a basic scoreboard analysis indicating a “high”, “low” or “no” impact on the 17 SDGs
- Stakeholders to provide input already together with the road map consultations
- Degree of relevance of the goals for an initiative defines the scope and proportionality of the analysis

Stakeholders engagement

- EU High- level multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs -mandate expired end of 2019

Structured consultation with a multidisciplinary scientific advisory body composed of scientific experts and civil society with variety of relevant expertise in addition to Commission services staff

- Benefits:
 - Ensure **independent scientific input** (science evidence for better policy making)
 - Assist the assessment of **expected various impacts** on SDGs in their complexity and interaction
 - Contribute to 3 phases: scoping-defining impact, impact assessment and ex-post evaluation
 - Depart from a mainly Commission-led (owned) process
 - Strengthen the impartiality and accountability of assessments

Review of the stakeholder consultation process (strengths and weaknesses) towards improvement

- NGOs claim of lack of clarity on how and if input was considered

Mainstreaming SDGs into the EU recovery plan

Building on lessons from 2008 economic crisis

Forthcoming economic and social recovery plans should be designed to support systemic change aligned with SDGs

- Must cover all the key systems (energy, mobility, nutrition, housing and leisure)
- Achieving the right balance between compensation and structural reorientation measures.
- Addresses major system lock-ins (e.g. dominant design; sunk costs; job markets; user practices and lifestyles; infrastructures).
- Strengthens economic, social and societal resilience to cope with multiple shocks
- Innovation for transformative change policies

State aid must be aligned to SDGs

With this new economic crisis, European Commission is approving state aid

Right now more than ever: should align rules of state aid to SDGs

Europe's recovery plan - 5 criteria for sustainability test

Criteria 1: Sound scientific basis -scientific evidence is brought to ensure effective public spending in response to the crisis.

Criteria 2: Resilience -by addressing vulnerability at its very root, recovery plans should strengthen economic, social and ecological resilience to cope with multiple shocks.

Criteria 3: Equity and solidarity -prioritise support for vulnerable households, communities, regions and countries

Criteria 4: Transformation- depart from carbon-intensive sectors towards novel sustainable practices and technologies; Replace environmentally harmful subsidies and inadequate regulatory regimes

Criteria 5: Scale - quality evidence regarding the adequacy and nature of recovery plans; green recovery scrutiny board

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/opinion/europes-recovery-plans-must-pass-five-sustainability-tests/>

Mainstreaming SDGs in the European Semester

- Dilemmas between targets to respond to the COVID19 crisis between 3 blocks:
 - SDG 1 : poverty
 - SDG 8 & 9 : decent work & economic growth ; industry, innovation & infrastructure
 - SDG 12, 13, 15, 16 : sustainable consumption, climate change, life under water & on land
- For now there's no tools to help in decision making in the confrontation between those blocks. The crisis is forcing us to look at them.
- The **European Semester** can become a key instrument for operationalising the SDGs and implementing the European Green Deal.

Under the new European Commission: European Semester aims at putting SDGs at the heart of EU's policymaking and action

Mainstreaming SDGs in the European Semester

- **Assessing the quality of recovery plans** and adopt a new approach in terms of recommendations and support for structural reforms
- Addressing systemic risk beyond the strictly economic and financial sphere
- Improving the sustainability scoreboard over time through new indicators, e.g. public funding for just transition
- The European Semester process should be complemented by a **2050 Strategy for Sustainable Prosperity**, with **long-term economic indicators**
 - Creation of relevant indicators on well-being, sustainability and intergenerational equity, upon which progress from Member States would be assessed



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